**21st Century Universal Constructs**

**Essential for 21st Century Success**

**Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is the ability to access and analyze key information to problem-solve and make informed decisions. It incorporates reflective and visionary processes. Critical thinking processes use higher order thinking and sound reasoning to guide behaviors and actions.

Research by: The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P-21), Wagner, OECD, Achieve, and enGauge 21st Century Skills

21st century critical thinking reflects:

•thoughtful questioning that challenges assumptions, promotes higher order thinking, leads to new insights, and validates perceptions

•metacognition that supports reflective practice

•processes that analyze, select, use, and evaluate various approaches to develop solutions

•analysis and synthesis of multiple sources and points of information

•intentional use of disciplinary frameworks to analyze complex issues and information

**Effective Communication**

Effective communication is based on the successful sharing of information through multiple means, including visual, digital, verbal, and nonverbal interactions. The message is purposeful, clear, and concise leading to an accurate exchange of information and ideas. 21st century learners will use multiple modes in this complex communication process.

Research by: P-21, Wagner, Costa, OECD, Palfrey & Gasser, Achieve, and enGauge 21st Century Skills

21st century effective communication reflects:

•cultural competence

•selection of appropriate communication mode(s)

•appropriate integration of various modes of communication

•understanding of the interactions among modes of communication

•meaningful and engaging interactions

•focus, energy and passion

•navigation through nuances of effective communication

**Creativity**

Creativity incorporates curiosity and innovation to generate new or original thoughts, interpretations, products, works, or techniques. Entrepreneurial thinking and related risk-taking, contributes to creative processing of ideas and information. Creativity is nurtured and advanced through numerous approaches, including inquiry-based learning, abstract thinking, and student-focused learning.

P-21, Wagner, Costa, Palfrey & Gasser, and enGauge 21st Century Skills

21st century creativity reflects:

• “capturing” or collecting new ideas for current or future use

•combination of seemingly unrelated ideas into something new

•respectful exchange of ideas

•modeling creativity through formal and informal learning experiences

•divergent thinking

•“entrepreneurial thinking” that encourages unique thoughts and applications

**Collaboration**

Collaboration is working among and across personal and global networks to achieve common goals. It requires cultural competence, acceptance of diversity, and personal and civic responsibilities in all environments. Collaboration also involves an understanding and application of multiple styles of leadership.

Research by: P-21, Wagner, OECD, Achieve, and enGauge 21st Century Skills

21st century collaboration reflects:

•non-hierarchal, leadership based on individual skill sets

•development of the individuals’ abilities to contribute and participate

•group synergy, (i.e.: the whole is greater than the sum of the parts)

•understanding and use of effective group processes to solve problems

•productive group interactions, that may include respectful disagreement

**Flexibility and Adaptability**

Flexibility is the ability to respond and adjust to situational needs. Adaptability involves changing to meet the challenges of new roles, paradigms and environments.

Intellectual agility, which fosters creativity and innovation, is an important component of flexibility and adaptability. They include the thoughtful balance between an individual’s core beliefs and appropriate reaction to change. Flexibility and adaptability are nurtured through life long learning and continuous improvement.

Research by: P-21, Wagner, Costa, Palfrey & Gasser, enGauge 21st Century Skills

21st century flexibility and adaptability reflect:

•engagement in innovation and creativity

•strategic agility

•expecting and accepting emotions inherent with change while supporting those involved

•embracing change

•respect for unique qualities of others and self

•purposefully and thoughtfully response to disruption/change

•acknowledging dissonance

•reflecting on positive and negative outcomes of risk-taking

•proactive and reactive approaches to change

**Productivity and Accountability**

Productivity is prioritizing, planning, and applying knowledge and skills to create quality results in an ever-changing environment. Individuals and teams demonstrate initiative, self-direction, and personal responsibility to add value to the world around them.

Individuals demonstrate accountability through efficient time management, appropriate resource allocation, and self-monitoring to produce relevant, high quality results. Individuals and teams recognize the interconnectedness of their actions at all levels.

21st century productivity and accountability reflect:

•use of appropriate processes and tools

•intrinsic motivation

•personal responsibility

•responsible risks

•persistence

•task integration

•high quality

•integrity

•competency